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A Lharie (physician) with his medicine bag and medicine book

12: Douglas T-3 (1951)1953 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ-

mycin, and even the newest of the antibiotics, terramycin. And en route through Europe I put in a supply of Entero Vioform.

My emphasis was wrong in two respects. In the first place, I discovered that diarrhea and dysentery did not necessarily carry the grave threat I had imagined. In the previous two summers I had been ill at least once a week as I journeyed through the Middle East and Asia. I maintained that average no matter how much care I took. But I learned a valuable lesson in Karachi from Mrs. Avra Warren, the wife of our Ambassador to Pakistan. It seems that the native remedy for diarrhea and dysentery is the psyllium seed. Mrs. Warren learned that the psyllium seed is also an excellent preventive. Take a small handful once a day for thirty days; then take that dosage once a week. Americans have learned that one who follows that routine seldom if ever has the intestinal disturbances that plague Asia. I learned by happenstance that one Entero Vioform tablet with each meal serves the same purpose. I followed that routine on my Himalayan trek, and I was never ill from stomach or intestinal troubles.

In the second place, I learned at Manali from Dr. H. W. Williams of the Lady Willingdon Hospital that my medical kit should have been designed not only for me and my staff's needs but for the needs of the natives as well. A foreigner who goes to these remote regions enters territory where doctors have never been. There are no medicines, no first-aid stations, no hospitals. A man coming from the outside world is expected to have medical remedies. The natives flock in at every camp for treatment.

But I learned this too late for me to enlarge my medical kit to any extent. I did, however, get several hundred aspirin from Dr. Williams as we left Manali. And that day was not gone before I started dispensing them.

The storm that caught us before we reached Koti the first day of the trek was a cold, devastating one. All of us, including the porters, were soaked through and chilled to the marrow. That evening at Koti six of them lined up in front of me.

were following the small Yunan River down to Kilung. A Tibetan who was bringing a caravan to Patseo twirled it as he followed rangy mules loaded with wool and marmot skins. And as he twirled it, he kept murmuring to himself, *"Om Mani Padme Hoom."*

In the main monastery at Hemis there are a half dozen or so prayer wheels set in the left-hand wall along rough rock steps leading down from one wing. They are perhaps eight by eighteen inches and filled with prayers. They too are engraved with *Om Mani Padme Hoom.* One spins them clockwise as he goes up or down the stairs, waiting, in case another has preceded him, until the earlier spin has ended. And as each spins, he murmurs, *"Om Mani Padme Hoom."*

Some prayer cylinders are spun by the wind. There is a large one at Hemis, about three feet long and eighteen inches wide, hitched up to paddles and turned by water. It too is filled with prayers that are repeated incessantly day and night, week after week, year after year. And the prayers say millions upon millions of times, *"Om Mani Padme Hoom."*

There are practically no doctors in Ladakh. Although each monastery will have a lama trained in native medicine who will take care of the illnesses of the monks, there is no medical service for the people. A villager who is sick sends for a lama. A child or the wife makes the journey to the nearest monastery (perhaps thirty or forty miles) and brings back a lama. The family gives the lama his board and lodging and pays him as much per day as it can afford. A man with a special attachment to the lama may turn his wife over to him for the duration of the visit. For these considerations the lama prays. He sits by the bed of the sick person for hours, for days on end, driving away the evil spirits that have caused the illness. And as he sits, he chants endlessly, incessantly, *"Om Mani Padme Hoom, Om Mani Padme Hoom."*

Buddha did not believe in mortification of the body as a means of salvation. But that belief is a religious longing deeply rooted

13: Heber and Heber D-3 (1914-25) 1926 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

lapping, the warmer the dress. Our chief meals are completed with a hot beverage, such as coffee, but they begin as well as end theirs with their butter-tea. Even the teeth of the carpenter's saw are sloped in the wrong direction compared with ours. If we listen to the cow, we note that she descends the scale as she moos, whereas our western cows moo from below upwards.

With us the protrusion of the tongue is a sign of contempt and derision, and is certainly not regarded as a sign of good breeding! With the Tibetan it is a very polite form of greeting, and its involuntary production often occurs from embarrassment or astonishment. In the west we wait for admittance at the door of the house. In Ladak, the house is penetrated until the desired one is found. When the "Doctor Sahib" was ill in bed not long after our arrival in Ladak, and while we were still learning many new things, the door between his bedroom and the dining-room suddenly opened to admit a not over-cleanly looking individual, with a loudly squawking and protesting cock under his arm, a token of gratitude for the "Doctor Sahib" from one of his patients, but the "Mem Sahib" would have preferred to receive it on his behalf further from the sensitive radius of a badly aching head. When our little girl donned a lamb-skin coat with the white fur outside, it was considered to be a most inside-out proceeding, while in Ladak hats are worn indoors as well as out-of-doors by both sexes. Even their treatment of nature seems to be the wrong way round, for they pray for sun to relieve a drought; but we have only to remember that the water supply and irrigation of the fields are entirely dependent on the summer melting of the winter snows away up on the mountain heights. Although the native doctors get plenty of rewards in both food and cash, it is often made plain to the European doctor that the reward for his services is the merit he wins, no doubt the reason for his leaving his own country and coming to such a far land, unless it be that the unaccount-

13: Heber and Heber D-3 (1914-25) 1926 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

able British Government is paying him some large salary for his services!

Strange is it to see the extraordinary mixture of finery and rags in their religious services, ceremonies and festivals, the rich brocaded Chinese silk gowns of the dancing lamas having little tags of cheapest gaudily-dyed butter muslin attached, while beautiful clothes are surmounted by tinselled hats, the latter the sort of rubbish that children love for "dressing up" in the west. Strange too, is the mixture of clownishness and solemnity, as seen especially at the Hemis festival. In the altars of little private chapels in the homes of the richer Buddhists, the most beautiful metal work will be found side-by-side with a cracked cup or an old tin, while in the matter of dress, dirt and finery often go together, nor do they seem to see the former in demanding a price for a second-hand, one might say an "umpteenth" hand, garment with beautiful Chinese embroidery, but so tattered and frayed and soiled, that a European can only reject it.

So does one thing after the other seem to our ideas the wrong way round in this strange land, where the term *mgologpa* ("head-turned" or "back to front" man) is a common term of reproach. But is it they who are, as it were, the wrong side of the Looking-Glass, or are we?

Some years ago one of our colleagues in the course of conversation with a Ladaki, referred to their peculiar and distinctive smell, and was filled with surprise and chagrin when he was told that that was quite comprehensible, for we *Pyigling pa* (pronounced Pilingpa, being literally outsiders, *i.e.*, foreigners) had an unpleasant odour in the Ladaki estimation also. Having some idea of the ratio of their ablutions to ours, this was a distinct blow to the Sahibs' vanity!

In attempting to understand this land and people, we must therefore remember that we are the outsiders and ours are extraordinary ideas and standards. After all, is it not wiser to expose your older dress to the daily wear and

13: Heber and Heber D-3 (1914-25) 1926 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

CHAPTER XIII

Professions & Industries

463 [511] WE have now to watch our Ladaki friends as they earn their livelihood, for not all are owners of fields, and even those who are find that an extra vocation allows of a dish of meat, rice and other luxuries on special occasions. Let us begin with the professional gentlemen. The clergy will be treated with elsewhere, but in addition there are doctor, horologist, teacher and nun to consider, all of whom, though not real priests, are ● 759 regarded as performing religious functions. There are quite a number of doctors, some of them doing useful work, although the treatment, by even the best of them, occasionally shows shocking results. Their method of training is much like that which obtained formerly in England, when he who aspired to medical knowledge became apprenticed to a practising physician, and thus by actual experience learnt his [779] trade. The theoretical knowledge is found in four large volumes, belonging to the *Kahgyur* which are the one hundred and eight large books containing the wisdom and knowledge of Lamaism. The doctor or *amchi* dons no distinctive dress, but he can always be recognized, for slung over his back he carries his medicines tied in a long cloth. These he has carefully collected on the hills during the spring and summer months, his knowledge of herbs being doubtless considerable, and to his stock he adds by purchases in the bazar from down- 757 country merchants. See him as he climbs up the rickety staircase right on to the roof to visit one of his patients who

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Lahul

shrine of the local deity (*yül-lha*, (*Yul-lha*)), where she offers up some *chang*. His father and three of his relatives have, in the meantime, carried a large pile of *tsampa* up to the same place, and they, too, present it to the god as an offering. A lama will then draw the figure of a stag in the dust in front of the shrine, and will shoot at it with an arrow from a bow he has brought. This is supposed to kill all evil which might attack the child.

Next, when a boy is between four and five, his hair is ritually cut in a ceremony which goes by the name of *Raldag* (probably *Ral-ltag*, "long hair-neck hair"). After three days of feasting in which the whole family, their relatives and their friends take part, the child's maternal uncle (*azhang* (*a-zhang*)) shears all his nephew's hair off and takes the locks to each person present in turn. In exchange for looking at the hair, they each give a small piece of money to the parents as a lucky offering.

The first doctor whom I saw was called Sönam Tashi (*bSod-Nams-bKra-shis*) and he was a lama from a village called Bardgi. He informed me that there were quite a lot of nervous ailments in Lahul, the principal ones being epilepsy and hysteria. The first of these two appeared when the person was about fifteen years old, and he attributed the cause to alcohol. He thought, too, that it might have some connection with the high incidence of venereal diseases to be found in the valley, infections which he said had been introduced from Kulu. Hysteria often brought with it symptoms of frigidity in women and of impotence in men, and he had a number of patients suffering in this way. As a cure for epilepsy, he advocated beating with hot juniper branches. Hysteria was better cured, he thought, by administering pills made of paper upon which prayers had been written.

There was a Government Hospital at Kyelang, and on the 28th June 1938 I went there to interview its director, Dr. Bhagwan Singh. I asked him about Tibetan medicine, and who the local doctors were in Lahul. He told me that there were quite a number of them and that they went by the name of *amchi* (*Am-ch'hi* or *Aem-ch'hi*). The best among them was Katug (*Ka-bTug*) of Chelling, but there were also Tsering Norbu (*Ts'he-ring Nor-bu*) of Billing, Dön-drup (*Don-Grub*) of Kardang, and the old uncle of the Wazir, Thakur Mangal Chand, *amchi* of Kyelang, whose Tibetan name was Tashi Dawa (*bKra-shis Zla-ba*). According to Dr. Bhagwan Singh, ayurvedic medicine (although I think this was only his way of naming Tibetan medicine as distinct from the Western system) was practised, but extra to this, considerable use was made of Tibetan medicinal herbs.

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Lahul

He told me that he treated the following diseases by Western methods: venereal (by far the greatest incidence), skin trouble, round worm, epilepsy, hysteria (mostly in women, especially unmarried ones), paraplegia and hemiplegia (due to syphilis), some cases of leprosy, eye inflammations due to various causes, ear infections, tuberculosis (which was on the increase due to winter promiscuity), but no cancer (at least observed). I discussed polyandry with him in conjunction with his remarks about the hysteria of unmarried women (who were numerous in Lahul because of polyandry, he said) and the promiscuity of the winter dwelling in one room, and he told me that he had had one case of suicide; it was a *no* (younger brother) he told me, who had put an end to his life because he was jealous of his brothers sharing the wife with him. He was thirty seven years old at the time, and there was no doubt that this jealousy was the actual reason for his fatal nervous affliction.

Since Thakur Mangal Chand was easily available in Kyelang, I next went to see him, on the 5th July 1938. An elderly man of over sixty, he had for a long time been Lahul's Forest Officer, but in his old age had turned to medicine and had become quite proficient in it and well known under his Tibetan name of Tashi Dawa. He told me that Tibetan medicine was ayurvedic to some extent, since it was the result of a translation of the Indian texts by Tibetan doctors acting on the orders of King Srong Tsän Gampo (*Srong-bTsan-sGam-po*) in the 7th century A.D. Asked if there was much nervous disease in Lahul, he replied that there was little. Light cases were treated by lama Sönam Tashi whom I had interviewed earlier on, while serious ones came to him. There were relatively more women ill in this manner than men, and hysteria was quite prevalent among them. He could, however, quote some cases of men, too.

Thus there was the case of a lama in Kardang, married polyandrously to a single, common wife with his two elder brothers. As long as they were alive, he was very jealous of them, as he wanted the woman all to himself. He developed a nervous paralysis of the leg which lasted as long as his brothers lived. They died, however, one after the other, so that in the end he was left with the wife alone. From that day onwards, he was cured; his paralysis disappeared and he was able to walk again.

He knew also of another case of an elder brother in the upper part of the Bhaga valley who was hysterically nervous, as he put it, because he could not stand the idea of sharing his wife with his younger brothers. Apparently, everybody in Lahul was not capable of living in polyandry and adapting himself to this form of matrimony.

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
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There was an entrance gate, a yard with a stable, a first floor with a *lha-k'hang*, as is usual. In this house which constituted the *k'hang-chen*, we found a family of two men, their common wife and three boys, as well as a divorced sister of the brothers. At the end of the field, attaining to the house, was a smaller building, with a field of its own. This was the *k'hang-gu*, and in it were the parents of the men. These parents consisted of a decrepit old hag and her three old husbands, and they had been living there for some six years already. The eldest of the men in the *k'hang-chen*, named Sonam Tsewang, acted as the informant, and it was with him that I made the genealogical tree of the family as shown here in Table 31.

The eldest sister of the fathers in the *k'hang-gu* was dead, it seemed. She had been married off in *bag-ma* to two brothers of a household called Chubipa, and she had had sons to continue the line there. The three brothers had married one woman called Sonam Putit – the old hag who was living with the men -- and these people had had five children, three daughters and two boys.

The eldest daughter, Tsewang Palmo, had fallen in love and married a Christian called Dorge, much to her family's displeasure, not so much because of the difference in religion, but because, being a convert of the mission, he had no land of his own (he had been excluded by his own family) and had to work as a peon. The second daughter, Standzin Rolma, had married into a household called Kushu but had since divorced and had returned to her brothers. She now lived in the *k'hang-chen* as is the custom, and her brothers had to see to it that she was maintained. I was not able to find out under what circumstances she divorced.

The two boys, Sonam Tsewang and Skalzang, were married polyandrously with a woman named Ishe Rolma. They had three boys with her, and the continuity of the Mahe household through males was thus assured. A sister, born between the birthdays of the two men, called Chungnid, was the one we had met at the Tok-Tok household on the 30th of August. She was married polyandrously in *bag-ma* there to the two sons of Stobgye, Tsering Murup and Tsering Norpel.

We spent the afternoon of the same day at the house of an *amchi* or native Tibetan doctor, the *Gadpo-pa* (*rGad-po-pa*) Household. There was only a grandmother alive in this house, and she lived in the *k'hang-gu* reserved for her. The son, Chonde, who was a doctor, lived in a larger *k'hang-gu* than usual, because, as an *amchi*, he had private means and could add to the small home as he wanted. Actually, the

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
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profession is hereditary, and although the other members of the family lived as peasants, one of the sons, usually the eldest, was educated as a doctor and became proficient in the trade, extra to the otherwise habitual agricultural work.

In the *k'hang-chen*, we found no less than four married men, sharing a very young wife (I was told that she was only fifteen, but considering that she had five children already, I feel that this could not have been true). The genealogy of the family is given here in Table 32.

The informant, Chonde, had two sisters, one older and one younger. They were both married off in *bag-ma*, and the youngest proved to be Tsewang Rolma whom we had met in the Tsang-bi Household, where she was wed to Tsang Dondrup as his second wife.

Of the informant's children, one, the third, had became a lama, while the fifth had preferred to go and be the *mag-pa* of the Amchi family (a related doctor's household, but bearing the name of the trade as a patronimic) than to remain at home with his brothers and share their common wife.

I did not visit another polyandrous household and make its genealogy until the 17th September 1938. And when I did so, it was at Chushod, opposite Leh, on the left bank of the Indus. Most of the inhabitants of this town are Musulmans, but there are a few Buddhist famililes among them, and it was interesting to see how they had retained their customs, including polyandry.

The family which Nono Tse-P'hün had specially brought me to see, however, was one in which there was a *porjag*, that is an extra man brought in when the husband or husbands fail to produce a child with their wife. The household name of this family was *Shing-k'hang pa* (*Shing-K'hang-pa*), and it consisted of only one man and his wife, Rigzin and Ishe Palkid, to which a younger man, the *porjag*, called Paldan, had been added. I made their genealogy, which I give in Table 33. It will be seen that other members of the household had left it to marry outside: Ngawang Standzin to become a lama, another brother of Rigzin, Skalzang, to become a *mag-pa*, a sister, now called Amina, who, having married a Musulman and changed her religion, was not considered to be part of the Buddhist community any longer, and Ishe Paljor, the youngest, who was a *porjag* in the Bata household (see Table 34).

The *k'hang-gu* in the fields of this household stood empty, its occupants, Rigzin's parents, P'huntzok and Paldzom, being dead now. The *k'hang-chen* which we visited was a house of normal Ladaki pro-